

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for recording interactions reflected in messages, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a first participant to a second

participant prior to said message arriving at said second participant;

wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device

deployed between the first participant and the second participant,

wherein the message is addressed to said second participant;

~~wherein said message includes requestor identifier information and~~

~~provider identifier information;~~

wherein said first participant is one of a requestor and a provider and the

second participant is the other of the requestor and the provider;

wherein the message is addressed to or addressed from a particular

address, the particular address being a unique Internet Protocol
address;

wherein the particular address is associated with the provider;

wherein the provider provides a plurality of different types of content in

response to requests addressed to the particular address;

wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different

from said requestor and said provider;

~~determining the identity of the requestor based on said requestor identifier~~

~~information in said message;~~

~~determining the identity of the provider based on said provider identifier~~

~~information in said message;~~

based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:

~~based on information in the message other than the particular address,~~
determining what content, ~~of the plurality of different types of~~
~~content provided by the provider at the particular address,~~ is being
provided by or requested from the provider in the message;

before the content is delivered to the requestor;

determining whether the requestor is required to pre-authorize
payment for the content;

in response to the determining that the requestor is required to pre-
authorize payment for the content, sending the requestor a
payment authorization request message;

in response to detecting that the requestor has authorized payment
for the content, retransmitting the message to allow the
requestor to obtain the content;

~~determining whether said content has billing implications;~~

~~if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing~~
~~service, the billing data being based on the determined content;~~

wherein the method is performed by one or more computer devices.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by
said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
~~wherein~~ sending data about the payment to said a billing service ~~occurs~~ in
response to said determining that said content is being or has been
provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the
intercepted message.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein:

- the third party performs the step of ~~billing~~ requesting payment authorization on behalf of the provider.
4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73 further comprising the computer-implemented step of:
- using said log to charge a particular participant for said content, wherein said particular participant is one of said first participant and said second participant.
5. (Canceled)
6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73 wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or the second participant is to pay for the content.
7. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for~~ of Claim 73 further comprising the computer-implemented step of:
- reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by a billing system.
8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
- determining that a particular participant of the first participant and second participant must pre-pay for the content;
- determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content; and
- determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile associated with the requestor; and
based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further wherein the message is a response from the provider and includes a price at which the provider is willing to provide the content.

12.–15.(Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of decrementing an account balance of the first participant or second participant when the requestor accesses the content.

17–24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~18~~ further comprising updating ~~the a~~ requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.

26–29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~29~~1 further comprising inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor requires pre-authorization for the content.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

- determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.
32. (Canceled)
33. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for~~of Claim 31 wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.
34. (Canceled)
35. (Canceled)
36. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:
determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and
if the provider is an authorized partner, then
retransmitting the message to the provider to obtain the content.
37. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for~~of Claim 36 wherein the step of determining whether the provider is an ~~approved~~authorized partner further comprises the computer-implemented steps of:
determining whether the content involves a fee by inspecting a provider profile;
if the content does involve a fee, then
establishing a secure connection with the provider; and
authenticating the provider by using an authentication mechanism.
38. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:
intercepting a message that has been sent from a first participant to a second participant prior to said message arriving at said second participant;

wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device
deployed between the first participant and the second participant,
wherein the message is addressed to said second participant;
~~wherein said message includes requestor identifier information and
provider identifier information;~~
wherein said first participant is one of a requestor and a provider and the
second participant is the other of the requestor and the provider;
wherein the message is addressed to or addressed from a particular
address, the particular address being a unique Internet Protocol
address;
wherein the particular address is associated with the provider;
wherein the provider provides a plurality of different types of content in
response to requests addressed to the particular address;
wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different
from said requestor and said provider;
~~determining the identity of the requestor based on said requestor identifier
information in said message;~~
~~determining the identity of the provider based on said provider identifier
information in said message;~~
based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party
performing the steps of:
~~based on information in the message other than the particular address,~~
determining what content, ~~of the plurality of different types of~~
content provided by the provider at the particular address, is being
provided by or requested from the provider in the message;
~~determining whether said content has billing implications;~~
~~if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing~~
service, the billing data being based on the determined content
before the content is delivered to the requestor;

determining whether the requestor is required to pre-authorize
payment for the content;
in response to the determining that the requestor is required to pre-
authorize payment for the content, sending the requestor a
payment authorization request message;
in response to detecting that the requestor has authorized payment
for the content, retransmitting the message to allow the
requestor to obtain the content.

39. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

using said log to charge a particular participant for said content, wherein said particular participant is one of said first participant and said second participant.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or second participant is to pay for the content.

42. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by a billing system.

43. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining that a particular participant of the first participant and second participant must pre-pay for the content;
determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content; and
determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content.

44. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile associated with the requestor; and
based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 wherein the message is a response from the provider and includes a price at which the provider is willing to provide the content.

47. (Canceled)

48. (Canceled)

49. (Canceled)

50. (Canceled)

51. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of decrementing an account balance of the first participant or second participant when the requestor accesses the content.

52–59. (Canceled)

60. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim ~~53~~38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of updating ~~the a~~a requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.

61–64. (Canceled)

65. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim ~~64~~38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor requires pre-authorization for the content.

66. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.

67. (Canceled)

68. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 66 wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

69. (Canceled)

70. (Canceled)

71. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and
if the provider is an authorized partner, then
retransmitting the message to the provider to obtain the content.

72. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 71 wherein instructions for determining whether the provider is an ~~approved~~authorized partner further comprise one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the content involves a fee by inspecting a provider profile;
if the content does involve a fee, then
establishing a secure connection with the provider; and
authenticating the provider by using an authentication mechanism.

73. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;
~~wherein the sending data sent to the a billing service is based on the log.~~

74. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~73~~1, wherein:
the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device;
and
~~generating the log of said message occurs in response to the software determining that the message has billing implications.~~

75. (Canceled)

76. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~75~~ 73, further comprising, at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an aggregation engine.

77. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising billing the provider for providing the content.

78.–83. (Canceled)

84. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;

~~wherein the sending data sent to the a billing service is based on the log.~~

85. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim ~~84~~ 38, wherein:

the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device;

and

~~generating the log of said message occurs in response to the software determining that the message has billing implications.~~

86. (Canceled)

87. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim ~~86~~ 84, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log,
wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an
aggregation engine.

88. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by
said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;

~~wherein sending data about the payment to said a billing service ~~occurs in~~~~
response to said determining that said content is being or has been
provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the
intercepted message.

89. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim ~~88~~ 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

billing the provider for providing the content.

90.-97. (Canceled)

98. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~97~~ 1, ~~wherein the provider identifier information is further comprising identifying the provider based on the address and wherein the information based upon which determining the type of the content is determined includes based upon a URL path.~~

99. (Canceled)

100. (Canceled)

101. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38,
~~wherein the provider identifier information is further comprising identifying the provider~~
~~based on the address and wherein the information based upon which determining the type~~
~~of the content is determined includes based upon a URL path.~~

102.–115. (Canceled)

116. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
intercepting a message that has been sent from a provider to a requestor, prior to
said message being received by the requestor;
wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device
deployed between the provider and the requestor, wherein the
message is addressed to the requestor;
wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different
from said requestor and said provider;
wherein the message includes a price at which the provider is willing to
provide content included in the message;
based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party
performing the steps of:
~~inspecting the message to determine what content, of a plurality of~~
~~different types of content, is being provided by the provider in the~~
~~message;~~
~~determining whether said content has billing implications;~~
reading the price from the message;
~~if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing~~
~~service, the billing data being based on the determined content~~
price that was extracted from the message by the software managed
by the third party;
wherein the method is performed by one or more computer devices.

117. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116 further comprising the steps of:
determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by
said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
wherein sending data to said billing service occurs in response to said determining
that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said
provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.
118. (Canceled)
119. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising billing the
provider for providing the content.
- 120.–123. (Canceled)
124. (New) The method of Claim 116, wherein:
the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device.
125. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising:
at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;
wherein the billing data sent to the billing service is based on the log.
126. (New) The method of Claim 125, further comprising, at an aggregation engine
external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the software managed by the
third party executes at an aggregation engine.
127. (New) The method of Claim 125, wherein the log includes information to
indicate how much the first participant or the second participant is to pay for the content.
128. (New) The method of Claim 125, further comprising the computer-implemented
step of:

reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by the billing service.

129. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising:
the third party requesting payment authorization for the price from the requestor on behalf of the provider.
130. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising:
determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content;
determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content; and
determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content.
131. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:
inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile associated with the requestor; and
based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.
132. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the step of decrementing an account balance of the requestor based on the price.
133. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising updating a requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.
134. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor requires pre-authorization for the content.

135. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.

136. (New) The method of Claim 135, wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

137. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and
if the provider is an authorized partner, then
retransmitting the message to the requestor.

138. (New) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

determining what content, of the plurality of different types of content provided by the provider at the particular address, is being provided by or requested from the provider in the message;
determining whether said content has billing implications;
if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based at least in part on the determined content.

139. (New) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a provider to a requestor, prior to said message being received by the requestor;

wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device
deployed between the provider and the requestor, wherein the
message is addressed to the requestor;
wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different
from said requestor and said provider;
wherein the message includes a price at which the provider is willing to
provide content included in the message;
based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party
performing the steps of:
reading the price from the message;
sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based on the
price that was extracted from the message by the software managed
by the third party;
wherein the method is performed by one or more computer devices.

140. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one
or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors,
causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by
said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
wherein sending data to said billing service occurs in response to said determining
that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said
provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.

141. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one
or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors,
causes the one or more processors to perform the step of billing the provider for providing
the content.

142. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, wherein:

the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device.

143. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;

wherein the billing data sent to the billing service is based on the log.

144. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 143, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of, at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an aggregation engine.

145. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 143, wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or the second participant is to pay for the content.

146. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 143, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by the billing service.

147. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

the third party requesting payment authorization for the price from the requestor on behalf of the provider.

148. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content;
determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content; and
determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content.

149. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile associated with the requestor; and
based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.

150. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of decrementing an account balance of the requestor based on the price.

151. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of updating a requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.

152. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors,

causes the one or more processors to perform the step of inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor requires pre-authorization for the content.

153. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.

154. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 153, wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

155. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and
if the provider is an authorized partner, then
retransmitting the message to the requestor.

156. (New) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining what content, of the plurality of different types of content provided by the provider at the particular address, is being provided by or requested from the provider in the message;
determining whether said content has billing implications;
if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based at least in part on the determined content.